

LA County Department of Regional Planning  
Zoning Enforcement West Area

## Introduction to Property Zoning Regulations| LA County Unincorporated Communities

Good morning, my name is Elsa Rodriguez and I am a planner at Los Angeles County's Department of Regional Planning. Today's presentation is an introduction to property zoning regulations within the unincorporated communities of Los Angeles County. As an inspector, I often meet real estate agents that are unfamiliar with zoning regulations. When I see a "for sale" sign go up on a property with an existing violation, I always try to make contact with the real estate agent prior to the sale of the property. Most importantly, I often deal with property owners who recently purchased a property with existing violations. At that time it's my job to advise the new homeowners that they just purchased a property with an existing zoning violation and they are now responsible for correcting the zoning violation.

LA County does not have a mandatory inspection program. We do not conduct inspections of properties when they are transferred to a new owner. Therefore, it is imperative that all real estate agents, prospective property owners and business owners know the zoning requirements prior to purchasing a property.

In response to this recurring problem, we created this educational presentation to show examples of why it's important to research zoning regulations before purchasing a property.



## The Four “Knows” Before You Buy:

- ❑ Know your jurisdiction
- ❑ Know your zone
- ❑ Know how to access the zoning code
- ❑ Know if it's legal

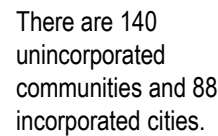
Today's presentation will be organized in the following order:

The “Four Knows” before buying are also listed in the brochure we developed in conjunction with this presentation. After, I will also discuss 8 case studies of property and business owners who failed to conduct any zoning research and the consequences from each case.

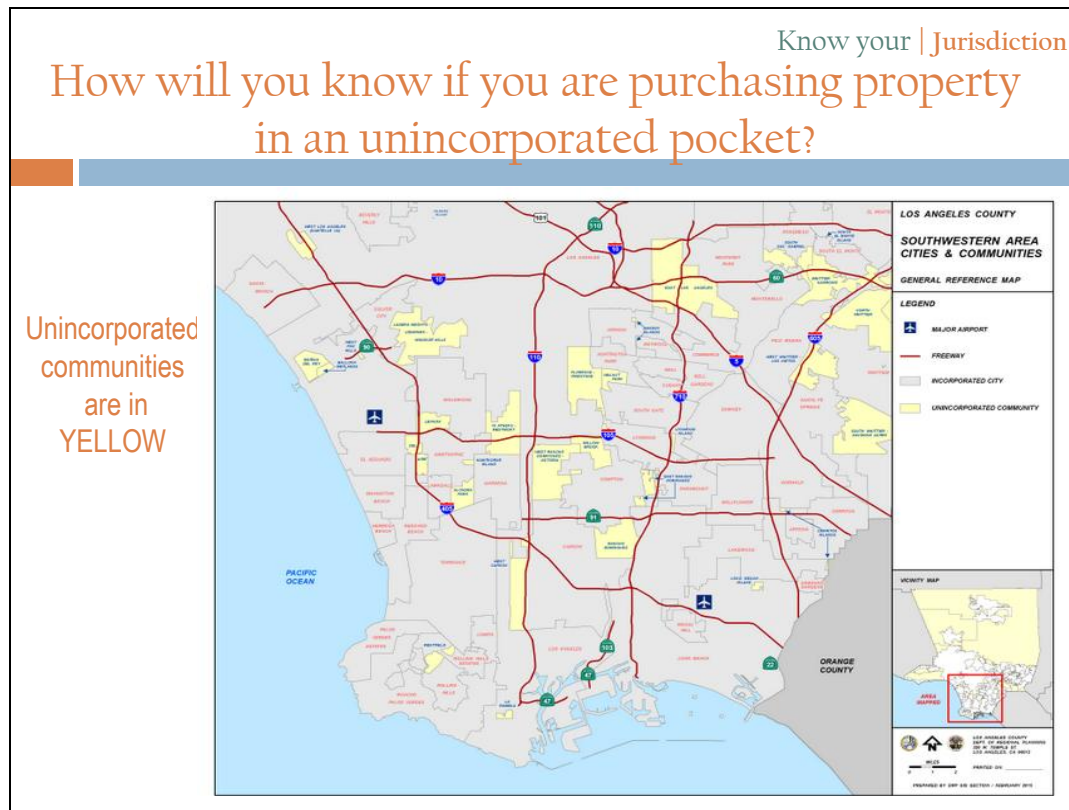


## □ Know your jurisdiction

The first “Know” before buying a property is “knowing your jurisdiction.”

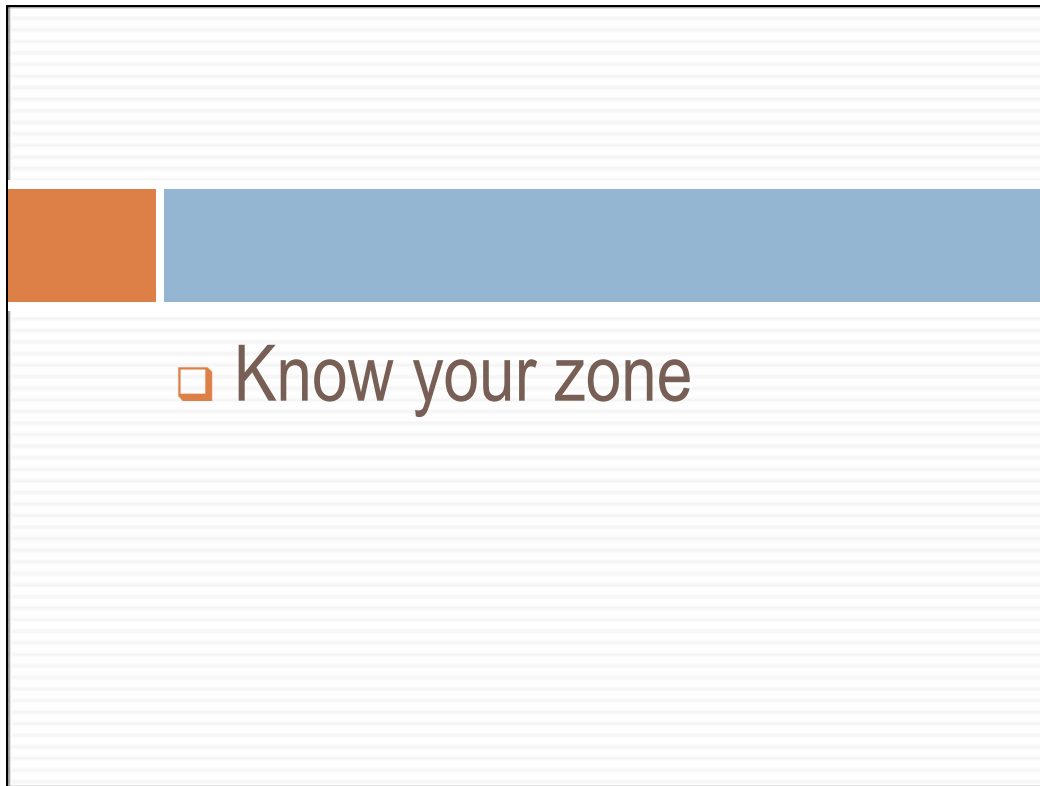


Unincorporated islands are not always identified by the US postal service; therefore, you should confirm your exact jurisdiction before purchasing a property. The post office follows zip codes, so homes that are located in the unincorporated community of Willowbrook will often have the same zip code as the City of Compton and their correspondence will not include the unincorporated community name. This can cause confusion for homeowners who often do not know they live in an unincorporated community.



This map highlights some of the unincorporated communities in the southwestern part of the county.

It is not always easy to know if you are in the County or a City. Zoning regulations can differ even if one side of the street is within city limits and the other side within the unincorporated Los Angeles County. Always try to visit the planning counter of the city or unincorporated community in which you are planning on purchasing or opening a business. In later slide I will show you how a public tool known as (Z-Net) to determine the jurisdiction of your property.



The second “know” is to determine your zone. Cities and unincorporated communities have designated zones for parcels in the community. The zone often determines what you can do on your property. Before purchasing a property or opening a business verify your zone.

Know your | Zone

## What is Zoning?

The regulation of land uses by local government to separate incompatible land uses and protect the general welfare.

Such regulations typically result in a designation of land into districts that may include:

- Residential (R-1, R-2, R-3...)
- Commercial (C-1, C-2, C-3...)
- Agricultural (A-1, A-2...)
- Industrial (M-1, M-2...)

Before moving forward I want to explain how zoning regulates land use. The purpose of zoning is to ensure orderly development while balancing property rights and protecting the quality of life for all residents in a community.

Title 22 (LA County Planning & Zoning Code) lists uses that are permitted or conditionally permitted in each zone. The zoning code also contains development standards that control the design and form of development. The zoning code is the tool used to implement the policies and goals of the General Plan. The General Plan is a long term plan that lists the goals and policies that will govern the development of the county for the next 20 years. The zoning code and a general plan are adopted by the Los Angeles County, Board of Supervisors.

A zoning violation occurs when a land use or activity is maintained contrary to the Zoning Code. Some zoning violations are obvious and can be seen while standing on the sidewalk or driving by, while others require more research.

<http://planning.lacounty.gov> Know your | Zone

The screenshot displays the official website of the Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning. At the top, the URL <http://planning.lacounty.gov> is shown in orange, followed by the slogan "Know your | Zone" in green and orange. The website header includes the "lacounty.gov" logo and a navigation menu with links: "Board Correspondence", "County Home", "County Public Alerts", "County Public Info", "Countywide Search", and "Other County Department". Below this is the "Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning" title and a search bar labeled "Search Regional Planning" with a "Go" button.

The main content area is divided into several sections:

- Case & Hearing**: View and Download Case and Hearing Information
- Plans & Ordinances**: Community Planning Efforts, Ordinances, Adopted Plans
- Applications & Forms**: Conditional Use Permit, Borden of Proof, Etc.
- Enforcement**: Report Problem / Violation, Zoning Violation Info, Etc.
- Land Use & Zoning**: LA County Code, Title 22, Zoning Ord. Summary, Etc.
- Maps & GIS**: Interactive Maps, Map Catalog, GIS Data

Below the navigation bar, there are three main promotional tiles:

- GO! Getting Started**: A green tile with a play button icon.
- FAQs Find Answers**: A blue tile with a play button icon.
- Meeting Video**: A video player showing a man in a suit.

To the right of these tiles is a sidebar with links: "DRP Home", "Find Answers", and "Contact DRP". Below these are sections for "Agendas & Minutes", "Contact Us", "Community Planning Efforts", "Countywide Planning Efforts", "Department Information", "More Information", and "Other Programs".

The bottom section of the page includes:

- Hours of Operation (Downtown Public Counter)**: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday 7:30 am to 5:30 pm; Wednesday 8:30 am to 5:30 pm; Our offices are closed on Fridays; Phone: (213) 974-6411; Email: [zoningldcc@planning.lacounty.gov](mailto:zoningldcc@planning.lacounty.gov); Now accepting major credit cards at this office.
- Click Here For Field Office Locations & Hours**
- Pumpkin Patch and Christmas Tree Lot Notice**
- Effective March 1, 2014 - Notice of Fee Adjustment Revised Fee Schedule**
- Upcoming / Recent Events**: A list of meetings including "1/15/15: Significant Ecological Areas Technical Advisory Committee Meeting (2015-01-12)", "1/6/15: Subdivision Committee Meeting (2015-01-08)", "1/7/15: Interdepartmental Engineering Committee Meeting (2015-01-07)", "1/7/15: Regional Planning Commission Meeting (2015-01-07)", "1/6/15: Hearing Officer Meeting (2015-01-06)", "12/31/14: Regional Planning Commission Meeting (2014-12-31) - NO MEETING", "12/25/14: Subdivision Committee Meeting (2014-12-25) - NO MEETING", "12/24/14: Regional Planning Commission Meeting (2014-12-24) - NO MEETING", and "12/22/14: B/S Planning Deputies Meeting (2014-12-22) - CANCELLED".
- Notable Cases**: Project No. R2014-01462-(4) / Venice Dual Force Sewer Main

The DRP website has a tool to find your zoning. Z-Net is located on the homepage and can assist prospective homeowners and real estate professionals determine what jurisdiction a property is in.



# Z-NET is public information

Know your | Zone

## Z-NET Find your zoning

[About](#) [FAQs](#) [Help](#) [Legend](#)

Search Z-Net for a property in unincorporated LA County by:

- Address
- Assessors Parcel Number (APN)
- Intersection

The screenshot displays the Z-NET web application. At the top, there's a navigation bar with the text 'Know your | Zone' and a red banner that says 'Z-NET Find your zoning' with links for 'About', 'FAQs', 'Help', and 'Legend'. Below this is a map of Southern California. A search overlay is visible, titled 'Enter an Address, APN or Intersection below.' It contains a text input field labeled 'Address/APN/Intersection Search:' and a 'Find' button. The map shows various cities including Santa Barbara, Simi Valley, Lancaster, Palmdale, Santa Clarita, Victorville, Barstow, Anaheim, Corona, Cathedral City, Palm Desert, Long Beach, and Santa Ana. A scale bar is on the left side of the map.

You can search Z-Net by APN, address & intersection.

# Z-NET is public information

Know your | Zone

## Z-NET Find your zoning

About FAQs Help | Legend

Layers Street Map Imagery Search Select Your Community

Parcel Boundary

APN: [REDACTED]  
Address: [REDACTED]  
Zip Code: 90044

R-2

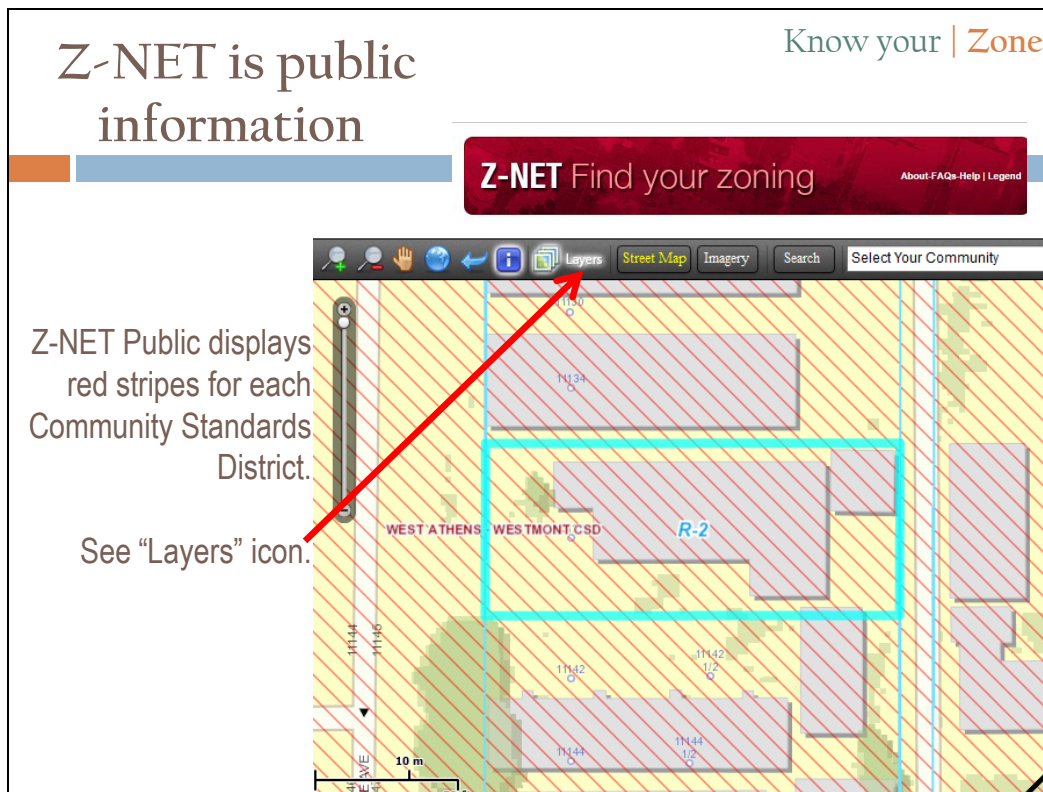
11130 11134 11138 11142 11142 1/2 11144 11144 1/2

10 m

Z-NET Public displays R-2 Zoning for property.

What other info can Z-NET provide about the property?

This image depicts a parcel zoned R-2 and lies within the unincorporated community of West Athens Westmont.



Z-Net also allows you to turn layers on and off. In this case I turned on the Community Standards Districts otherwise known as a (CSD). The CSD is an additional layer of regulation applied to a community that addresses specific goals or issues for such community. For example, the Westmont West Athens CSD requires property owners to maintain a minimum of 50% of their front yard landscaped; this is unique to that community.

## Z-NET is public information

Know your | Zone

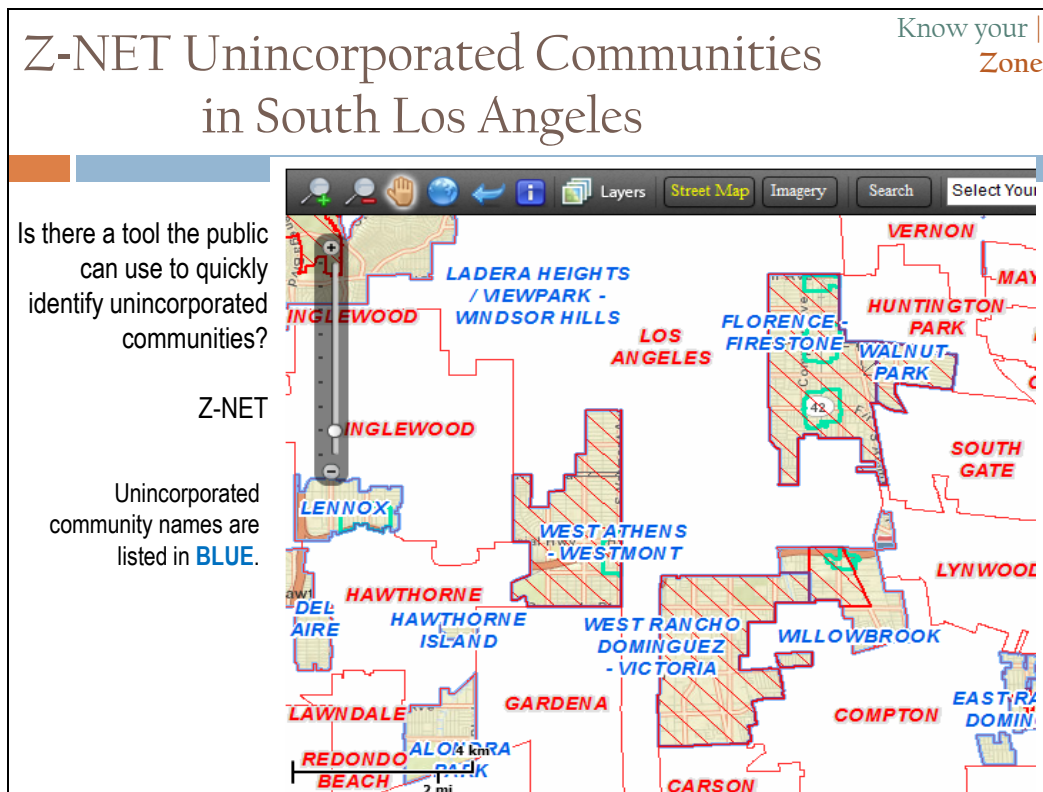
Search by community name zoom in/out, pan, turn layers on/off.

Can you see the Transit Oriented Districts (TODs)?

**Z-NET** Find your zoning About-FAQs-Help | Legend

You can also search by the name of your community. In this case I have highlighted West Athens Westmont and you can see the neighboring unincorporated communities such as Lennox and Willowbrook and West Rancho Dominguez. You can zoom in and out.

I like this map because you can see how these County communities are integrated next to incorporated cities. Also important to note is the TOD (Transit Oriented Districts) areas outlined in green. These areas contain Metro rail stops and have their own set of standards that apply to development within the TOD.



Lastly, this slide highlights the communities in South LA abutting incorporated cities. The unincorporated communities' names are in blue, while the cities are in red.



## □ Know how to access the zoning code

Now that you know how to determine your jurisdiction and how to identify your zone, you should know what you can do on your property and what sort of design or permits may be required? The next set of slides will cover how to access the zoning code and how it is organized.



Our webpage provides up to date information on discretionary cases, upcoming hearings, plans and ordinances. It also provides applications and forms necessary for development, maps and zoning information.

The Department of Regional Planning performs all land use planning functions for the unincorporated areas of L.A. County. One of those functions is to enforce and implement the Los Angeles County Zoning Code, Title 22. The Zoning Code regulates the uses on a property, including the form and design. The Zoning Enforcement Section is responsible for implementing and enforcing the zoning code.

# Title 22 - Los Angeles County Planning & Zoning Code

Know your | **Zoning Code**

What sort of development is permitted in a community?

Is there a community standards district in my community?

Title 22

<http://planning.lacounty.gov/luz>

The screenshot shows the website for the Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning. The navigation bar includes links for Case & Hearing, Plans & Ordinances, Applications & Forms, Enforcement, Land Use & Zoning (highlighted with a red dashed box), and Maps & GIS. The 'Land Use & Zoning' section contains a 'Helpful Links' box with links to Interpretation and Procedures Memos, L.A. County Code, Title 21 - Subdivisions, Title 22 - Planning & Zoning (highlighted with a red arrow), and Zoning Ordinance Summary. The main content area includes sections for Land Use Policy, Land Use Plans, and Zoning Ordinance Summary. A 'Table of Contents' box on the right lists Residential Zones, Agricultural Zones, Combining Zones, and Commercial Zones.

Access to Title 22 can be found on our home page. Point to dashed box under “Land Use & Zoning.”



Know your | **Zoning Code**

## Title 22- Los Angeles County Code

Find the **ZONE** for the property you are interested in.

Research online or go to a planning counter and inquire about the **ZONING CODE!**

Is the intended use of the property permitted in that zone?

The screenshot shows the iMunicode website interface. The left sidebar contains a list of titles from the Los Angeles County Code of Ordinances. Title 22 - PLANNING AND ZONING is selected and highlighted. The main content area displays the title and a list of divisions. Division 1 - PLANNING AND ZONING is highlighted with a red arrow. Other divisions listed include Division 2 - ADDITIONAL REGULATIONS, APPENDIX 1 - LEGISLATIVE HISTORY FOR ORDINANCE 1494, APPENDIX 2 - CROSS REFERENCE TABLE FOR ORDINANCE 1494, APPENDIX 3 - MINIMUM DIMENSIONS FOR PARKING STALLS, and TITLES 23-25 - (RESERVED).

Click on Planning & Zoning

Know your | **Zoning Code**

# Title 22- Los Angeles County Code

**Division 1 PLANNING AND ZONING**

**Chapters:**

- [Chapter 22.04 - INTRODUCTORY PROVISIONS](#)
- [Chapter 22.08 - DEFINITIONS](#)
- [Chapter 22.12 - ZONES AND DISTRICTS](#)
- [Chapter 22.16 - ZONED DISTRICTS AND MAPS](#)
- [Chapter 22.20 - RESIDENTIAL ZONES](#)
- [Chapter 22.24 - AGRICULTURAL ZONES](#)
- [Chapter 22.28 - COMMERCIAL ZONES](#)
- [Chapter 22.32 - INDUSTRIAL ZONES](#)
- [Chapter 22.36 - PUBLICLY OWNED PROPERTY](#)
- [Chapter 22.40 - SPECIAL PURPOSE AND COMBINING ZONES](#)
- [Chapter 22.44 - SUPPLEMENTAL DISTRICTS](#)
- [Chapter 22.46 - SPECIFIC PLANS](#)
- [Chapter 22.48 - YARDS, HIGHWAY LINES AND HIGHWAYS](#)
- [Chapter 22.52 - GENERAL REGULATIONS](#)
- [Chapter 22.56 - CONDITIONAL USE PERMITS, VARIANCES, NONCONFORMING USES, TEMPORARY USES AND DIRECTORY](#)
- [Chapter 22.60 - ADMINISTRATION](#)
- [Chapter 22.62 - ADULT BUSINESSES](#)
- [Chapter 22.64 - LEGISLATIVE PROVISIONS](#)

Los Angeles County, California, Code of Ordinances >> Title 22 - PLANNING /

**Chapter 22.20 RESIDENTIAL ZONES**

**Parts:**

- [Part 1 - GENERAL REGULATIONS\\*](#)
- [Part 2 - R-1 SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENCE ZONE](#)
- [Part 3 - R-2 TWO-FAMILY RESIDENCE ZONE](#)
- [Part 4 - R-3-1 UNLIMITED MULTIPLE RESIDENCE ZONE](#)
- [Part 5 - R-4-1 UNLIMITED RESIDENCE ZONE](#)
- [Part 6 - R-A RESIDENTIAL AGRICULTURAL ZONE](#)
- [Part 7 - RPD RESIDENTIAL PLANNED DEVELOPMENT ZONE](#)

This is the table of contents for Title 22. The arrow above is pointing to residential zones, if you click on it all the regulations will be listed and the specific R-1, R-2, R-3 and R-4 zoning information is outlined.

Know your | **Zoning Code**

## Zoning Code Categories

Category	Meaning
Permitted uses	“allowed by right w/ site plan”
Accessory uses	“allowed as an accessory to a primary use”
Uses subject to directors review	“allowed with an approved site plan, may trigger noticing or conditions”
Uses subject to permits	“allowed with a conditional use permit”
Development standards	“required development standards for that use”

Before moving forward I would like to discuss how categories are listed in the Zoning Code. Although these are not all the categories in the zoning code (Title 22), these are the most common.

Permitted- means a use that is allowed to operate by right in that zone with a site plan. A site plan depicts the layout of your property and the locations of all your existing and proposed structures. It's a “bird's eye view drawing of the property.”

Accessory – means a structure subordinate to the primary use. For example, a storage shed is a permitted accessory structure/use to a single family home.

A Directors review- means you must submit a site plan for a new use or structure being proposed. Even though this application is an administrative review process, it can include notification and depending on the findings, it can include some conditions for your project.

Uses Subject to permits - typically means it triggers a Conditional Use Permit (CUP). Such permits are discretionary, which means they are subject to a hearing and public comment.

Development standards- are those guidelines such as: building height, setbacks, signage, fences, parking, landscaping, and outside storage. Such regulations differ depending on the zone.

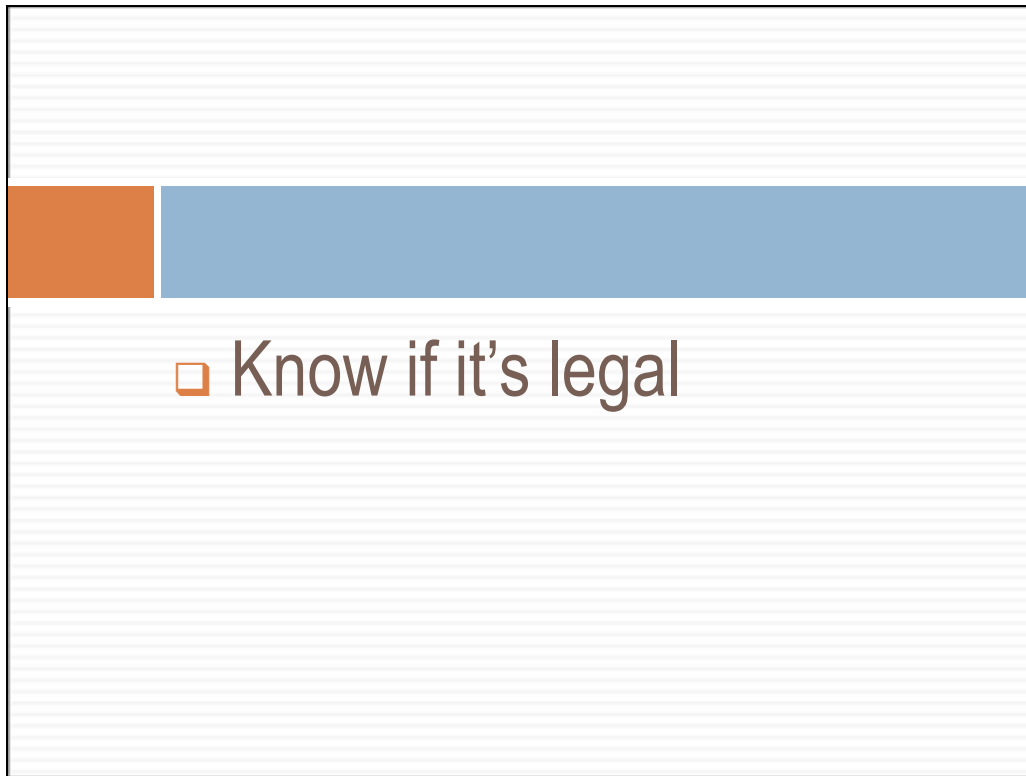
Know your **Zoning Code**

## Other info in the Zoning Code

The screenshot displays the municode website interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with links like 'BUY PUBLICATION', 'MY DASHBOARD', 'HELP', 'LOG IN', and 'VIEW MOBILE S'. Below this is a search bar with a 'GO' button. The main content area is titled 'Los Angeles County, California, Code of Ordinances >> Title 22 - PLANNING AND ZONING >> Division 1 PLANNING AND ZONING >>'. On the left, a sidebar lists the 'CodeBank' with a dropdown menu set to 'Current Version'. The sidebar also shows a tree view of the code structure, including 'LOS ANGELES COUNTY CODE', 'SUPPLEMENT HISTORY TABLE', 'CHARTER OF THE COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES', and various titles from 1 to 26. The main content area lists 'Chapters' under 'Division 1 PLANNING AND ZONING', including:
 

- Chapter 22.04 - INTRODUCTORY PROVISIONS
- Chapter 22.08 - DEFINITIONS
- Chapter 22.12 - ZONES AND DISTRICTS
- Chapter 22.16 - ZONED DISTRICTS AND MAPS
- Chapter 22.20 - RESIDENTIAL ZONES
- Chapter 22.24 - AGRICULTURAL ZONES
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- Chapter 22.52 - GENERAL REGULATIONS
- Chapter 22.56 - CONDITIONAL USE PERMITS, VARIANCES, NONCONFORMING USES, TEMPORARY USES AND DIRECTOR'S REVIEW
- Chapter 22.60 - ADMINISTRATION\*
- Chapter 22.62 - ADULT BUSINESSES
- Chapter 22.64 - LEGISLATIVE PROVISIONS

Besides information about residential uses, Title 22, Chapter 22.44 also includes Supplemental Districts such as the Community Standards Districts, Equestrian Districts, Agricultural zones, Commercial Zones, Industrial Zones, and even information about alcohol and adult related businesses.



Now that you have learned how to access the zoning code, you should ask yourself if what you see on the property is legal. Or if what you intend to use the property for is legal otherwise unpermitted structures or uses can lead a zoning violation.

Know | Is it Legal?

## What is a zoning violation?

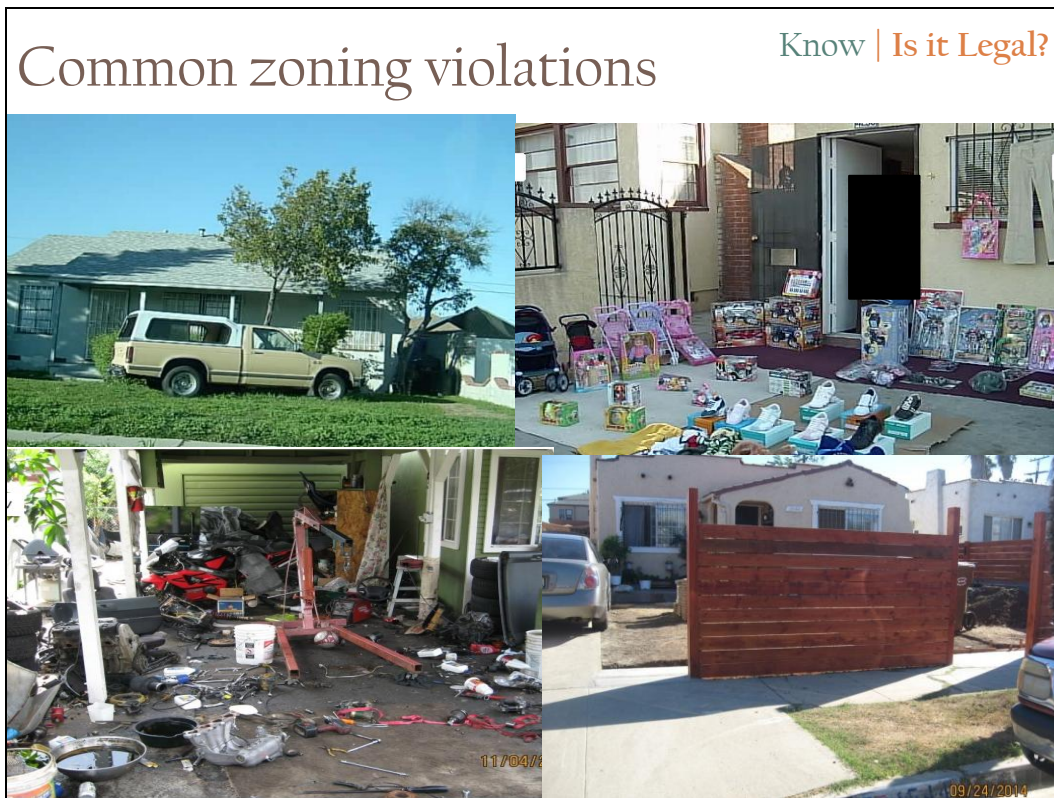
- ☐ A zoning violation is any land use/activity maintained on a property contrary to the provisions of Title 22- LA County's Planning and Zoning Code.
- ☐ A zoning violation is a misdemeanor or an infraction against a property owner in a court of law, it does NOT lead to a lien therefore will NOT appear in a title search.
- ☐ Property owners may be referred to LA County's District Attorney's Office Code Enforcement Unit for prosecution, if no action is taken to abate violations.
- ☐ LA County does NOT inspect properties when they are transferred to a new owner. Therefore, it is important for YOU to conduct your own research.

Read the slide.



The following images depict some common zoning violations inspectors see in the field including garage conversions, unpermitted additions, junk & salvage, and inoperable vehicles. In the case of a garage, the image depicts how vehicle access to the garage has been blocked and doors and windows have been added over the years to create an illegal habitable space.

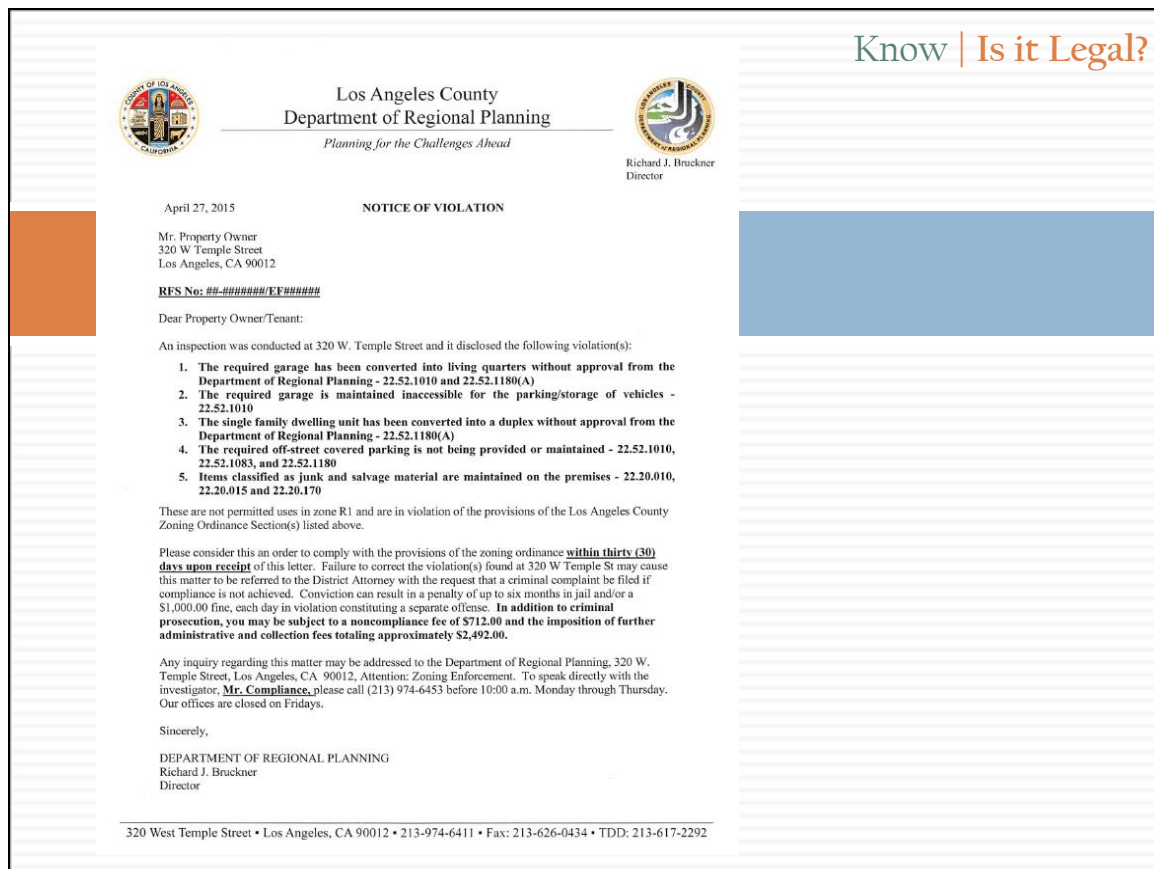
While there are many causes for neighborhood deterioration, one important and preventable factor is the intrusion of illegal uses. Preventing illegal uses such as these can be a tool for neighborhood maintenance and enhancement.



Other violations include parking or storing vehicles on the lawn, an over height fence, unpermitted home based businesses such as auto repair and excessive yard sales in residential zones. Yes! The zoning code does tell us how many yard sales are permitted and also lists the permitted fence heights in all zones.

Some violations are easier to abate than others, the violations shown here are not structural.





The image depicts a copy of a Notice of Violation (NOV); it itemizes the violations & code sections and gives a 30 day compliance date. All except one of the violations listed are structural and take a significant amount of time and money to legalize/abate.

This owner thought he purchased a duplex plus a guest house, but in fact only one dwelling was legal and the “guest house” was a converted garage. He chose to restore the garage, legalize the duplex and provide the required covered parking with a 3-car carport. His plans were approved by DRP and he is working with Building & Safety to pull the required building permits. This is a costly investment, and the owner could have avoided all the hassle if he would have done some research.

I hope that by attending this presentation you will be able to avoid all code violations and be able to conduct research before purchasing a property.

Know | Is it Legal?

## Does my property have a violation?

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- ☐ Call or visit the **Zoning Enforcement Section** – Ask if any open cases/actions/complaints exist on the subject property? [\(213\) 974-6453](tel:(213)974-6453) or [\(213\) 974-6483](tel:(213)974-6483)
- ☐ Call or visit the **Department of Regional Planning** – Ask to see any approved land use entitlements for your property. [\(213\) 974- 6411](tel:(213)974-6411)
- ☐ Research **ALL the Building & Safety Building Permits at** LA County Public Works Department for any indication of a violation. 1) Visit one of the field offices 2) Access building permit viewer online 3) Conduct a microfiche permits search
- ☐ Research **All the Assessor Records, especially the “Building Description Blanks”**. 1) Visit one of the field offices 2) Bring an ID to prove you are the owner 3) Ask for assistance when interpreting the records.

How will you know if your property has a zoning violation? You may begin by calling or visiting the Zoning Enforcement Section and asking if there are any open cases at your property. Also, just because there is no “history” of zoning violations at your property, does not mean that your property is free of zoning violations or other code violations, including, but not limited to, building code violations and Fire Code violations.

Then the next step would be to pull all the existing building permits for your property at the Department of Public Works - Building & Safety Office. I am not an employee for the DPW; questions regarding building permits should be addressed to them.

Last, you should visit the LA County Assessor’s Office and pull the “building description blanks” for your property. These records depict a drawing of the structures on your parcel. You should always ask for assistance when interpreting these records.

As a quick reminder, these research methods apply only if you are purchasing property within the unincorporated communities of Los Angeles County. You can use our free online tool (Z-Net) to identify if your property is within unincorporated Los Angeles County.

# LA COUNTY Department of Public Works building permit viewer

Know | Is it  
Legal?

<http://dpw.lacounty.gov/bsd/bpv/>

Department of Public Works  
Headquarters (626) 458-5100

The website above is a public tool that lets you view permits that have been obtained for a certain property. You can search for permits by address, cross streets and Assessor's Parcel Number (APN). The tabs at the top list the open and expired permits for a property.

My recommendation is to do some basic research online, but always visit B&S field office and ask for clarification on all the permits. Permit Viewer is not all inclusive and it is not always updated.

Know | Is it  
Legal?

**APPLICATION FOR BUILDING PERMIT** 1

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES  
DEPARTMENT OF COUNTY ENGINEER  
BUILDING AND SAFETY DIVISION  
JOHN A. LANDIE, COUNTY ENGINEER  
GARRETT D. GRIFFIN, SUPT. OF BUILDING

**BUILDING ADDRESS** [REDACTED]  
**LOCALITY** [REDACTED]  
**DISTRICT NO.** 7 **GROUP** 1 **TYPE** CONST. **PROPOSED BY** [REDACTED]  
**STATISTICAL CLASSIFICATION** **CLASS NO.** 8 **DWELL. UNITS** 0 **ADJ. MAP** [REDACTED]  
**MAP NUMBER** 1125 **STATE** YES **NO** YES **NO** YES **NO**  
**USE ZONE** R-4 **SPECIAL CONDITIONS**

**LOT NO.** 2096 **TRACT** 2096 **NO. OF BLDGS. NOW ON LOT** 2  
**SIZE OF LOT** 46-130 **USE OF EXISTING BLDG.** [REDACTED]  
**OWNER** [REDACTED]  
**MAIL ADDRESS** [REDACTED] **TEL. NO.** PL 62472  
**CITY** [REDACTED] **ARCHITECT OR ENGINEER** [REDACTED] **TEL. NO.** [REDACTED]  
**ADDRESS** [REDACTED] **CONTRACTOR** [REDACTED] **TEL. NO.** [REDACTED]  
**ADDRESS** [REDACTED]

**DESCRIPTION OF WORK**  
NEW ☒ ALTER ☐ REPAIR ☐ DEMO. ☐ **NO. OF STORIES** 1 **NO. OF FAMILIES** 3  
**USE OF STRUCTURE** Bath-Room ADD TO EXIST. GARAGE  
**SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT** [REDACTED]  
**ADDRESS** [REDACTED]  
**VALUATION \$** 900.00 **P.C. FEE \$** 5.00 **P.M. FEE \$** 5.00  
I HEREBY ACKNOWLEDGE THAT I HAVE READ THIS APPLICATION AND STATE THAT THE ABOVE IS CORRECT AND AGREE TO COMPLY WITH ALL COUNTY ORDINANCES AND STATE LAWS  
**SIGNATURE OF PRINCIPAL** [REDACTED]  
**ADDRESS** [REDACTED]

**INSPECTION RECORD**  
2-21-61 BRACE CORNER WALL  
2-16-61 BRIDGE LOCKER RAIL

**APPROVALS** **DATE** **INSPECTOR'S SIGNATURE**  
FOUNDATION LOCATION 1-29-60 Hill  
FORMS, MATERIALS 2-8-60 Hill  
FRAME, FIRE STOPS, BRACING, BOLTS 2-11-60 Hill  
FURNACE LOCATION, GAS VENT, DUCTS 2-16-60 Hill  
LATH, INT. 2-23-60 Hill  
LATH, EXT. 2-23-60 Hill  
HOUSE NUMBER CORRECT AND POSTED 2-23-60 Hill  
**FINAL** 2-23-60 Hill

**PLAN CHECK VALIDATION** ☒ R.D. CLK  
**PERMIT VALIDATION** ☒ R.D. CLK  
CLYDEN DURLAW, PRINCIPAL STRUCTURAL ENGINEER  
1000703 JAN 28 1A 500 P.M.  
B.C. Life

Above is an example of what a building permit from the 1960s may look like. I obtained this permit by requesting a microfiche search of building permits at one of the local B&S field offices. An important item to look for is the "final inspection date." Also as part of my research I always read the description of work performed, in this case the property owners "added a 5'X10' bathroom to an existing garage. Other details of the property are that this property was in fact a single level triplex "No. of Families indicates -3" and "No. of stories is #1."

Again, I am not an employee of DPW all questions and research should be directed at a building official. This permit is just one of many potential examples.

## Slide 29

Know | Is it  
Legal?

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS BUILDING AND SAFETY / LAND DEVELOPMENT		SOUTHWEST DISTRICT OFFICE # 0700 1120 IMPERIAL HIGHWAY LOS ANGELES CA 90044 PHONE: (323) 820-6500 EXT:		BUILDING PERMIT ALTERNATION/REPAIR No. 0700 1205240501	
LEGAL ID: ON FILE	NO. OF STORIES	CONST TYPE	BUILDING ADDRESS		
ADDRESS INFORMATION NUMBER:	STRUCTURE: 468	V-B	ADDRESS: [REDACTED] CITY: [REDACTED] LOCALITY: [REDACTED]		
TENANT:	EXIST BLDG USE: SFD	USE ZONE: R-1	ISSUED ON: 08/07/12		
OWNER:	EXIST OCC GRP:	VALUATION: 98,000	FINAL DATE: 11/6/12		
TEL. NO. (618) 344-4449	BLDGS. NOW ON LOT:		FINAL BY: [REDACTED] CODE: [REDACTED]		
AFFILIANT: SAME AS OWNER	FEE DESCRIPTION:		DESCRIPTION OF WORK		
TEL. NO.:	QUANTITY:	DOOR	ADD 324SQFT ATTACHED CARPORT, LEGALIZE 468SQFT BEDROOM/PLAY ROOM ADDITION TO SFD TO MAKE IT A 4-BEDROOM 2-BATH SFD, AND INTERIOR REMODEL AND REPLACE ALL WINDOWS		
CONTRACTOR: SAME AS OWNER	AA BLDG PERMIT INSURANCE	98000.00 VAL	SPECIAL CONDITIONS:		
LIC. NO.:	AB STATE GREEN BLDG FEE	98000.00 VAL	RFP 2012-00590		
ARCHITECT OR ENGINEER:	AC STRONG MOTION RESID	98000.00 VAL	APPROVALS		
TEL. NO.:	DA PLANCHUCK W/O EN-SC	98000.00 VAL	DATE		
LIC. NO.:	DS PERMIT W/O EN-SC	98000.00 VAL	INSPECTOR SIGNATURE		
MAS NO. BLDG MAP BOOK: PAGE:	FS ISV WORK W/O PERMIT	1.00 DOL	LOCATION AND SETBACKS		
FIRE ZONE: 3	TOTAL FEES	169.75			
NO. OF FAMILIES: DWELLING UNITS: APT/COND: STAT CLASS:		2,574.00			
0 NO 21	AIR QUALITY:				
	SCHOOL WITHIN 1000 FEET				
	HAZARDOUS MATERIALS				
	NO				
	NO				

820.12 Peds for carport  
OK [REDACTED]

LEAD HAZARD WARNING:  
Due to the possible presence of lead-based paint, lead safe work practices are required for all repairs in pre-1970 buildings that disturb paint. Failure to do so could create lead hazards that reduce children's health and safety.

This is an example of a newer building permit, it was issued in 2012 and according to the description of work, the permit was obtained to add an attached 324sf carport, legalize a 468sf playroom/bedroom addition to make it a 4 bedroom 2 baths SFD. Often times building permits are not finalized. It is important to call B&S and request a final inspection otherwise, the permit remains opened and runs the risk of expiring which can lead to having to obtain another permit at an additional cost. Luckily this building permit was finalized.

In the majority of my cases B&S inspectors give property owners corrections/advise as to how to perform the work and then after they satisfy the B&S code, the new construction inspector closes out the case by granting it a final signature. It's important to remember that the B&S code is different from the zoning code. A property owner or a licensed contractor can obtain building permits for new construction, but anyone can obtain permit history of a property for small fee.

Slide 30

Know | Is it  
Legal?

DESCRIPTION OF BUILDING										SINGLE RESIDENTIAL		BUILDING RECORD		ADDRESS	
ASS. & SHAPE NO.	STY.	ARCHITECTURE	YR. BLT.	L.A. CO. ASSESSOR		CITY	ADDRESS		PARCEL	SUB. PART					
FOUNDATION				EXTERIOR		ROOF STYLE		LIGHTING		AIR COND.		ROOM & FINISH		DETAIL	
STRUCTURAL				WALLS		FLOORS		CEILINGS		KITCHEN		BATH		DETAIL	
WINDOWS				FIREPLACES		PLUMBING		ELECTRICAL		SPECIAL FEATURES		RATING (E.G. A.F.P.)			
YEAR	USE	CLASS	SHAPE	UNITS	EFF. DEPR.	SO. FEET	UNIT	R.C.N.	R.C.N.	%	R.C.L.N.D.	SP	APPRAISER	DATE	COST
COMPUTATIONS															
Unit	Area	Unit	Cost	Area	Unit	Cost	Area	Unit	Cost	Area	Unit	Cost	Area	Unit	Cost
Res	896	9.40	8420												
Gar	192	3.00	580												
Total R.C.N.															

This is an example of a “building description blank” from the assessor’s office. The red dashed detail that this property includes a 896 square foot “Res” or residence and a 192 square foot “Gar” or garage.

These documents are not easy to read and you should always ask for help from staff at LA County Assessor’s Office .



[illegible]

# BUYER BEWARE!!

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## Eight Property Case Studies | Why Zoning Research Matters

The next few slides are a series of case studies we have compiled that best depict the importance of doing zoning research before purchasing a property. Every case has a unique set of circumstances and represents a violation of Title 22. As you may have already guessed, these violations were not always visible from the street. These are typically structural violations that triggered additional permits.



## Case #1 Dance Hall in C-3 Zone


Is the nature of my business permitted by right? Or do I need a permit?



A man purchased a commercial property in a C-3 (Unlimited Commercial) zone in South LA. He placed his life savings into the purchase and did not bother to conduct any preliminary research regarding the property. He wanted to open a banquet hall business and have alcohol sales onsite.

Before making the purchase he should have asked himself if the proposed business is permitted by right or if it needs a permit to operate? Someone submitted an anonymous complaint to my office regarding the noise, parking problems and alcohol sales at the property. As a result, I opened a case and began researching the matter.

## Dance Hall in C-3 Zone

- “Dance Hall” are these uses permitted in Title 22?
- No onsite parking, noise complaints, alcohol sales?
- Triggers CUP application approximately \$9,000 cost and one year to review.
- What does the Zoning Code say about C-3 zones?
  - ▣ Permitted use
  - ▣ Accessory use
  - ▣ Use subject to site plan review
  - ▣ Use subject to permits 
  - ▣ Development standards for that use

I looked at the zoning code and learned that a “Dance Hall” in the C-3 zone is permitted only with an approved conditional use permit (CUP). A CUP is a significant investment; it costs approximately \$9,000 and takes about 6-9 months to review depending on the project, and several more months for controversial projects and the planner’s case load.

A CUP triggers a public hearing, which means that neighboring property owners will be notified to let them know of the proposed business. The scope of the proposed project will be shared with other L.A. County agencies such as Public Works, Fire & Health to name a few. There is no guarantee the CUP will be approved. If it is approved there are a set of conditions tied to the CUP, such as hours of operation, parking requirements, state alcohol licensing requirements, etc..that must be met in order to operate.

In this case without the approved CUP from the Department of Regional Planning, an LA County business license will not be issued for the business.

Another important aspect is that a CUP may be renewed and it REMAINS with the property. So if the operator goes out of business another similar business owner can come and occupy the space if the CUP has not expired.

The property owner failed to apply for a CUP and was sent to L.A. County Tax Collector, he has accumulated a total of \$2,464.00 and the next step is a referral to the County’s District Attorney’s office for criminal prosecution.

## Case #2 One Property- Two Jurisdictions

My home is  
in the City  
but my  
converted  
garage is in  
LA County!



A property owner was cited for having a garage conversion and an unpermitted addition to the garage after our Zoning Enforcement (ZE) section received a complaint.

After doing some research, I learned that his parcel was located within an unincorporated community as well as an incorporated city. However, the violation was located on the county side.

Jurisdictional boundaries are not perfect. Often boundaries were established before we had the technology that we have today. Zones in maps were often depicted as “blobs” instead of parcel based. The owner of the property had no idea his property was split before purchasing his home. Finding a property within two jurisdictions is not as uncommon as you may imagine.

He ended up restoring the garage and attempted to legalize the unpermitted addition to the garage as storage. However, his plot plan was denied because he did not meet the standards. In this case the neighboring city had to be notified about the project and the owner was very upset when he learned he had a split parcel. He spent several hours going back and forth to determine if he could legalize the storage addition to his garage. It is important that all real estate professionals and homeowners find out if their parcel is split in order to avoid the hassle of dealing with two jurisdictions instead of one.

## Case #3 One building, Two jurisdictions

How can one parcel sit on **TWO** jurisdictions and have different land uses?

What business was in that building anyway?



A complaint was submitted to the ZE section regarding a new medical marijuana dispensary (MMD) business. MMDs are not permitted in the unincorporated communities of Los Angeles County. However, many other cities do permit these types of businesses, including the city of LA.

After doing some research, I learned that approximately 17 feet of the building was located in the unincorporated community, while the remaining 50 feet of the building was located in the City of LA. The building was in the middle of two jurisdictions.

The business owner removed his business from the county side; he was very upset since he lost a front door and additional display area for his business. In order to avoid a similar situation all business owners should research and verify that their business is allowed in that zone.

The map image depicts the county with red shading while the building outline is within the dashed green lines.

## Case #4 Unpermitted Second Dwelling

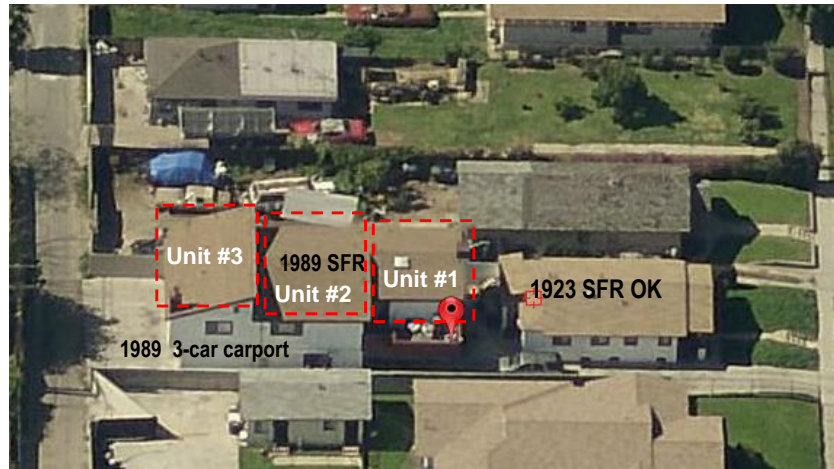


The ZE section received a complaint for auto repair and unpermitted additions to a single family home. After conducting an inspection I found that there was an entire unpermitted second unit behind the original 1928 single family residence (SFR).

This particular property is zoned R-2 and therefore the owner had the option to legalize the second unit as long as they could meet the development standards. In this case the owner ceased the auto repair and submitted a plot plan to legalize the second unit. The owner stated she purchased the property that way and did not know the second unit was unpermitted. Her plot plan was approved by DRP, she must build a new covered 3-car carport to meet the today's parking requirements and she must pull building permits to legalize the second unit.

Before purchasing a property verify that all structures are legal at the local Building & Safety Office. This owner would have spared herself thousands of dollars if she would have consulted with building & safety prior to purchasing the property.

## Case #5 SFR>Triplex in R-2 Zone



The ZE section received a complaint for an unpermitted unit. After researching old plot plans and building permits, I learned that there was a legal SFR built in 1923. Then in 1989 a large 2,600 square foot single family home and a 3-car carport built behind the original home.

However, when I conducted an inspection I learned that the rear SFR built in 1989 had been subdivided into a triplex and was rented out to three different families.



## Carport? Or unit?

Unpermitted dwelling unit; inaccessible covered parking



This image depicts the view of the SFR converted into a triplex from the alley. One of the units is only accessible through the enclosed carport. Not only did this owner illegally subdivide his SFR, but he also made the required covered parking space inaccessible by enclosing it and adding a staircase. The other two carports are also inaccessible because the owner stores his personal items there, blocking covered parking for his tenants.

The owner refused to restore the SFR back to its approved use and he was referred to the L.A. County District Attorney's Office (DA). He did not want to remove the extra kitchens or the subdividing walls. The property went into foreclosure and is now owned by a bank. I am currently working with them to prevent the property from being transferred to a new owner without disclosing the violations.

A dwelling unit contains 1 kitchen and in this case the SFR contained 3 kitchens

Buyer beware.

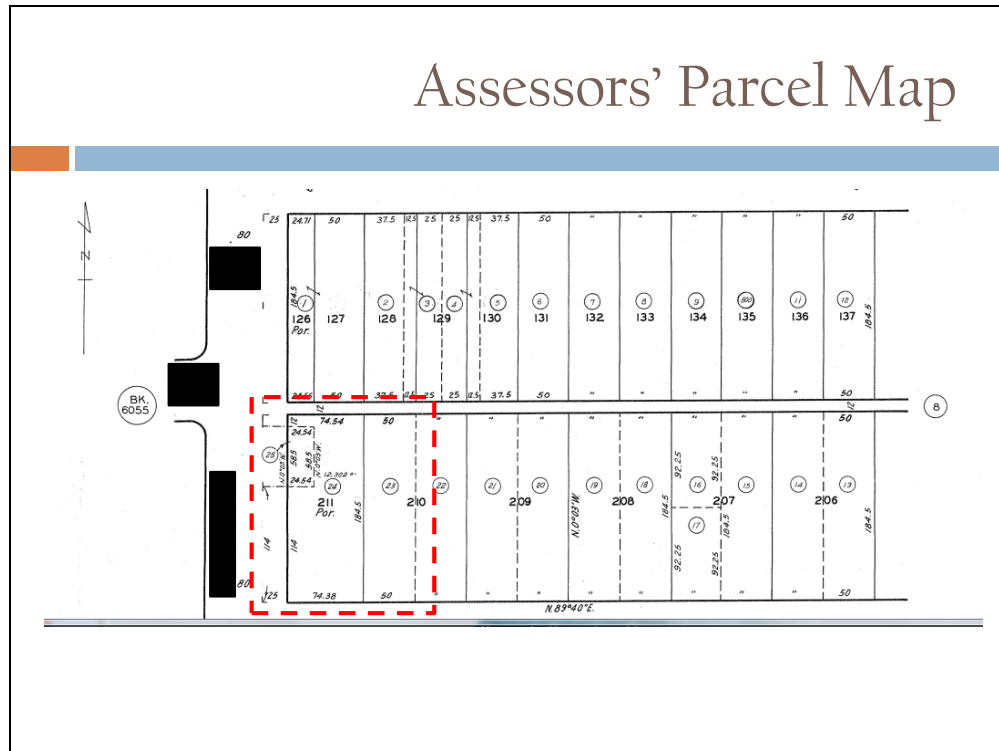
## Case #6 used car sales lot in C-2



The ZE section received a complaint for an unpermitted carwash operating in C-2 zone. When I went out there I observed a carwash business operating inside a few patios with garden hoses. I noticed the water was seeping into the dirt and running along the sidewalks. When I contacted the owner, and learned that his vision for the large lot was to open a used car sales lot.

So I began my research.





The first thing I noticed was that the large corner lot was actually three parcels, each with its own APN number.

I also noticed a dashed line, in most instances it means that a parcel was created by deed in lieu of a subdivision. These type of lots often trigger additional research and a property owner must obtain a Certificate of Compliance from DRP's Land Divisions Research Section. They can be reached at 213 974-5035.

# What does the code permit?

The screenshot shows the Municode website interface. The top navigation bar includes links for BUY PUBLICATION, MY DASHBOARD, HELP, LOG IN, and VIEW MOBILE. A search bar is present with a 'GO' button. The left sidebar displays a tree view of the Los Angeles County Code of Ordinances, with 'Title 22 - PLANNING AND ZONING' selected. The main content area shows the '22.28.180 Permitted Uses.' section, which lists permitted commercial uses in Zone C-3. The list includes: Sales, Antique shops, Appliance stores, household, Art galleries, Art supply stores, Auction houses, excluding animal auctions, and Automobile sales, sale of new and used motor vehicles. The last two items are highlighted with a red dashed box.

I looked in the code to see if he could establish a used car sales lot and found that the sale of new and used motor vehicles is permitted by right in the C-3 zone. The property is zoned C-2, and only allows the sale of new motor vehicles, not used.

## Can he at least have a carwash?

**SUPPLEMENT HISTORY TABLE**

- CHARTER OF THE COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
- Title 1 - GENERAL PROVISIONS
- Title 2 - ADMINISTRATION
- Title 3 - ADVISORY COMMISSIONS AND COMTEES
- Title 4 - REVENUE AND FINANCE
- Title 5 - PERSONNEL
- Title 6 - SALARIES
- Title 7 - BUSINESS LICENSES
- Title 8 - CONSUMER PROTECTION AND COMPLAINTS
- Title 9 - (RESERVED)
- Title 10 - ANIMALS
- Title 11 - HEALTH AND SAFETY
- Title 12 - ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
- Title 13 - PUBLIC PEACE, MORALS AND DISORDER
- Title 14 - (RESERVED)
- Title 15 - VEHICLES AND TRAFFIC
- Title 16 - HIGHWAYS
- Title 17 - PARKS, BEACHES AND OTHER RECREATION
- Title 18 - (RESERVED)
- Title 19 - AIRPORTS AND HARBORS
- Title 20 - UTILITIES
- FLOOD CONTROL DISTRICT CODE
- Title 21 - SUBDIVISIONS
- Title 22 - PLANNING AND ZONING
- Title 26 - BUILDING CODE
- Title 27 - ELECTRICAL CODE

**22.28.130 Permitted Uses.**

Premises in Zone C-2 may be used for:

- A. The following commercial uses, provided all sales are retail only and all goods sold, except genuine antiques and items sold at secondhand stores, are new:
  - 1. Sales.
- Antique shops, genuine antiques only.
- Appliance stores, household.
- Art galleries.
- Art supply stores.
- Automobile sales, sale of new motor vehicles, and including incidental repair and washing subject to the provisions of subsection B of [Section 22.28.090](#) (Zone C-1).
- Automobile supply stores, including incidental installation of parts subject to the provisions of subsection B of [Section 22.28.090](#) (Zone C-1).

He asked me if he could at least establish a carwash, and unfortunately automobile washing, waxing and polishing is only permitted in the C-2 zones as an accessory to new car sales.

This owner decided to apply for a zone change, from a C-2 to a C-3. I learned that he owned several used auto sales lots in the city of LA and wanted to open a used car sales lot on this particular corner because it was close to his other used car lots.

A zone change is discretionary review that requires a public hearing and currently costs around \$16,000. The review process begins with DRP staff who will help the applicant determine if the project is appropriate and resolve any issues the proposed zone change may cause before it goes to public hearing. The project will go before the Regional Planning Commission (RPC) and finalizes at the Board of Supervisors (BOS), who make the final decision. Both decision making bodies are tasked with balancing the needs of the larger community and the interests of the applicant when deciding to approve or deny the project.

# Only as an accessory use

The screenshot displays the Municode website interface. The top navigation bar includes links for 'BUY PUBLICATION', 'MY DASHBOARD', 'HELP', 'LOG IN', and 'VIEW MOBILE SITE'. A search bar is prominently featured with a 'GO' button. Below the navigation bar, a sidebar on the left lists the 'Los Angeles County, California - Code of Ordinances' with various titles and sections. The main content area is titled '22.28.090 Accessory uses.' and contains the following text:

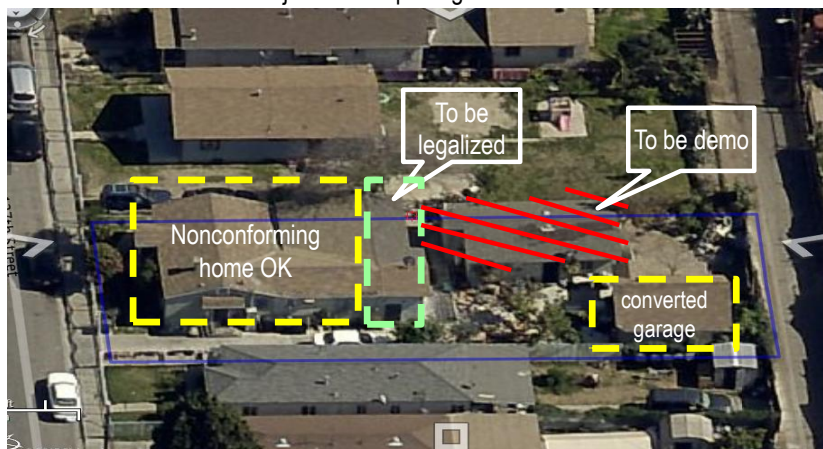
Premises in Zone C-1 may be used for:

- A. The following accessory uses subject to the same limitations and conditions provided in [Section 22.28.040](#) (Zone C-H):
  - Accessory buildings and structures.
  - Building materials, storage of.
- B. The following additional accessory uses:
  - Automobile repair and parts installation incidental to the sale of new automobiles, automobile service stations and automobile supply stores, provided:
    1. That such automobile repair activities do not include body and fender work, painting, major engine overhaul, or transmission repair; and
    2. That all repair and installation activities are conducted within an enclosed building only; and
    3. That a masonry wall is established and maintained along an abutting boundary with property in a residential or agricultural zone as if the area were developed for parking pursuant to [Section 22.52.1060](#); and
    4. That landscaping comprises an area of not less than two percent of the gross area developed for the primary use; and
    5. That all required parking spaces are clearly marked with paint or other easily distinguishable material; and
    6. That all repair or installation activities are confined to the hours between 7:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m. daily; and

This is an example of how our code describes the accessory uses. At this time the large corner lot is still sitting vacant. The property owner has struggled to secure a good consultant.

## Case #7 Non-conforming Home?

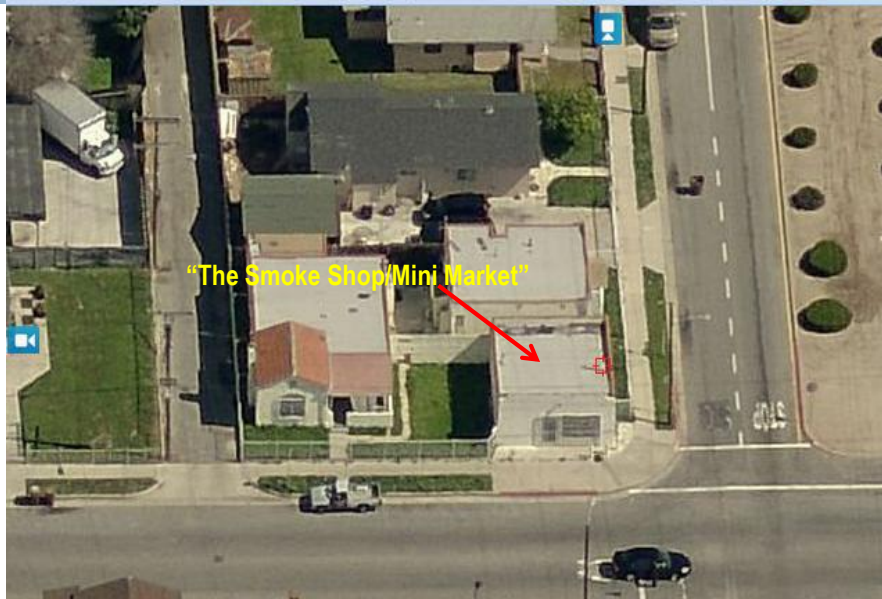
- ❑ Legally built homes exist throughout the county in **commercial and industrial zones**.  
These homes are nonconforming to today's standards.
- ❑ Today's zoning code does not allow new homes "by right" in such zones.
- ❑ Nonconforming homes are allowed to remain but any modifications to the home are limited and subject to multiple regulations.



A complaint was received in the ZE section for a converted garage and unpermitted addition to a SFR. The inspector learned that this residence was legally built prior to the zone becoming M-1 (Light Industrial). Therefore, the residence is legal nonconforming to the zone but it is allowed to remain, this is commonly known as-- "Grandfathering." However, the inspector also noted a large unpermitted addition that was done to the home, before the owner purchased the property.

In this case the owner ended up restoring the garage back to its original use; he demolished a large section of his home (stripped red) and submitted a plot plan to legalize a small addition to his home (green dashes). Given the limitations of the nonconforming home he is only allowed to propose 92 square feet of habitable space. The property owner was extremely upset to learn that he needed to demo a large portion of his home since it was added illegally and could not be legalized. His plot plan is still pending for the 92 square feet.

## Case #8 mini market in R-2 zone?



A property owner purchased a property at an auction without seeing the property or researching any of the permits. I drove by one day and noticed a new business was coming into the community.

I noticed it had new paint, lighting, and windows. After doing some research I learned that this "mini market" was not permitted in a residential zone. As it turns out the shop used to be attached to the home and used to be someone's music room. A previous homeowner closed it off and tried to create a separate use out of it.

The business owners were stunned to learn that they would never be granted a business license to operate in the Two Family Residential Zone (R-2). They shared with me they had spent almost \$8,000, purchasing new lighting, display cabinets, security equipment and even new front door.

Just because something looks legitimate does not mean that it is. Always do your research before investing in a property.

## Public Counter & Field Offices

- For more details regarding your property please visit our public counter or one of the field offices.  
LA County's Department of Regional Planning,  
Land Development Coordinating Center (LDCC)  
320 W Temple St. 13<sup>th</sup> floor Los Angeles, CA 90012
- For any specific questions please contact the  
LDCC (213) 947- 6411 [zoningldcc@planning.lacounty.gov](mailto:zoningldcc@planning.lacounty.gov)

You can also obtain zoning information at the Downtown public counter known as the Land Development Coordinating Center or at one of the field offices listed on the brochure.

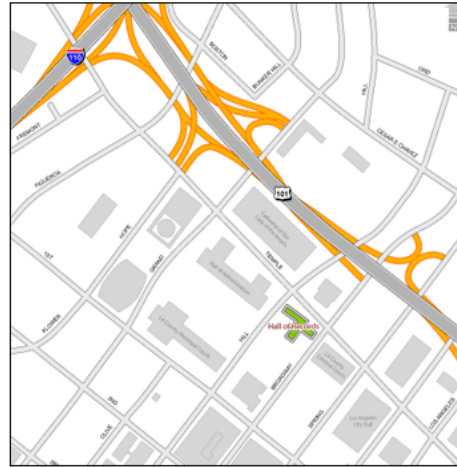
# THANK YOU!

Department of Regional Planning  
320 West Temple Street, 13th Floor  
Los Angeles, California 90012

Phone: (213) 974-6411  
Fax: (213) 626-0434  
TDD: (213) 617-2292

Email: [zoningldc@planning.lacounty.gov](mailto:zoningldc@planning.lacounty.gov)

The Hall of Records is conveniently located adjacent to the Civic Center Station of the Metro Red Line subway. The building is directly in front of the escalator at the Temple Street exit of the Civic Center Station.



LA COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF REGIONAL PLANNING  
320 W Temple Street Los Angeles CA 90012  
Land Development Coordinating Center 13<sup>th</sup> Floor

Thank you for your participation, our contact information is on the slide. For more information about our field offices please see the "Buying Property? *What To Know Before You Buy*" Brochure that accompanies this presentation.